

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) Vacuum heat insulating material comprising:

a core material containing inorganic fibers, wherein the inorganic fibers include silicon oxide as a main component, a Si-OH/Si-O ratio of a surface of the inorganic fibers being made equal to or higher than 0.1 and equal to or lower than 1.0 by treating the inorganic fibers with moisture, and the core material being a formed body of the inorganic fibers provided by an adhesion of the inorganic fibers to one another by an intermolecular interaction of Si-OH groups existing at the surface of the inorganic fibers; and

an exterior covering material having gas barrier performance, the vacuum heat insulating material being provided by depressurizing interior of the exterior covering material, wherein:

the inorganic fibers include silicon oxide as a main component;

Si-OH/Si-O ratio of a surface of the inorganic fibers is equal to or higher than 0.1 and equal to or lower than 1.0; and

the core material is a formed body of the inorganic fibers provided by adhesion of the inorganic fibers to one another by an intermolecular interaction of Si-OH groups existing at the surface of the inorganic fibers.

2. (Previously Presented) The vacuum heat insulating material according to claim 1, wherein the intermolecular interaction is Si-OH group hydrogen bonding at the surface of the inorganic fibers.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) The vacuum heat insulating material according to claim 1, wherein the core material has a density equal to or higher than  $150\text{kg/m}^3$  and equal to or lower than  $300\text{kg/m}^3$ .

5. (Previously Presented) The vacuum heat insulating material according to claim 1, wherein the core material has bending strength equal to or higher than 0.03 MPa and equal to or lower than 0.10 MPa.

6. (Previously Presented) The vacuum heat insulating material according to claim 1, wherein Si-OH groups are introduced to the surface of the fibers by contact between the surface of the fibers and water molecules.

7. (Currently Amended) A refrigeration equipment having a refrigerating box at least including a vacuum heat insulating material, wherein:

the vacuum heat insulating material comprises

a core material containing inorganic fibers, wherein the inorganic fibers include silicon oxide as a main component, a Si-OH/Si-O ratio of a surface of the inorganic fibers being made equal to or higher than 0.1 and equal to or lower than 1.0 by treating the inorganic fibers with moisture, and the core material being a formed body of the inorganic fibers provided by an adhesion of the inorganic fibers to one another by an intermolecular interaction of Si-OH groups existing at the surface of the inorganic fibers; and

an exterior covering material having gas barrier performance in which interior of the exterior covering material is depressurized;

~~the inorganic fibers include silicon oxide as a main component;~~

~~Si-OH/Si-O ratio of a surface of the inorganic fibers is equal to or higher than 0.1 and equal to or lower than 1.0; and~~

~~the core material is a formed body of the inorganic fibers provided by adhesion of the inorganic fibers to one another by an intermolecular interaction of Si-OH groups existing at the surface of the inorganic fibers.~~

8. (Original) The refrigeration equipment according to claim 7, wherein the refrigeration equipment is a refrigerator/freezer that uses the vacuum heat insulating material at least for heat insulation of a freezing compartment.

9. (Previously Presented) The refrigeration equipment according to claim 7, wherein the intermolecular interaction is Si-OH group hydrogen bonding existing at the surface of the fibers.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (New) The vacuum heat insulating material according to claim 1, wherein the treatment with moisture is performed before the depressurizing of the interior of the exterior covering material.

12. (New) The vacuum heat insulating material according to claim 1, wherein the core is formed by heat compression.

13. (New) The vacuum heat insulating material according to claim 1, wherein the inorganic fibers have a diameter of 3  $\mu\text{m}$  or higher.

14. (New) The vacuum heat insulating material according to claim 13, wherein the inorganic fibers have a diameter of 3 to 4  $\mu\text{m}$ .

15. (New) The vacuum heat insulating material according to claim 1, wherein no binder or binding product of eluted components exists on the surface of the inorganic fibers at intersecting points.